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ABSTRACT

Just as one has a different sense of a mountain from each approach to it, so each group theory gives differing and somewhat overlapping aspects of group functioning. Each approach can help explain part of what is going on. Jung focuses on the perceptual and evaluative aspects of the individual and the resulting group consequences. Schutz focuses on the interpersonal needs of inclusion, control, and affection. The three sets of needs are always present but to a varying degree in different individuals and in different phases of group development. Groups start with inclusion behavior, which is followed by the emergence of control and finally affection behaviors. Important for a group's existence is members' compatibility, the satisfaction of one's own and each other's needs. Bion considers group emotionality. The main emotional assumptions which are reflected in group behavior are dependency relations between the members and the leader, fight-flight or aggression-withdrawal, and pairing or shared interest in which members may be engaged. As the group seeks to accomplish its work it has to come to terms with its emotionality as expressed through the shifting basic (emotional) assumptions. (Author/JEI)

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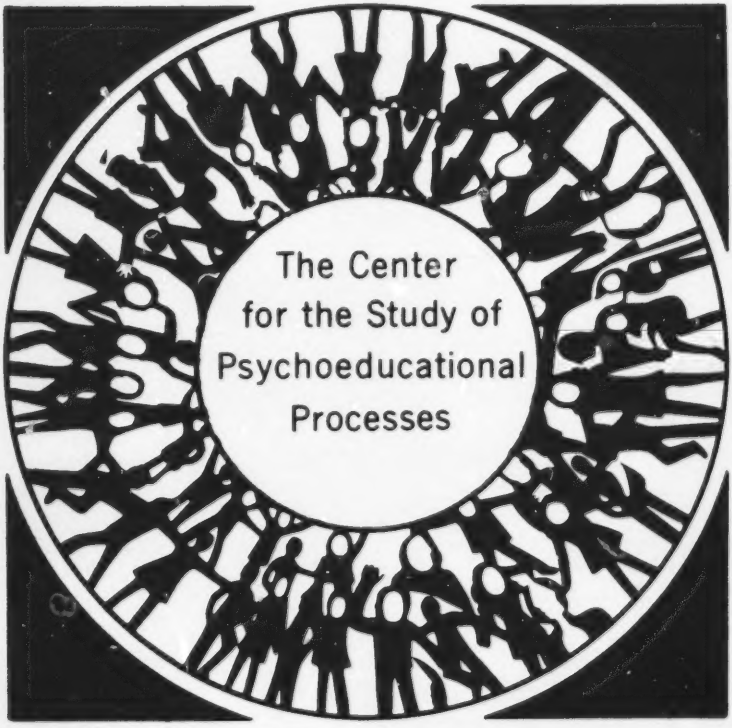
Differing Views of a Mountain: Groups from Various Perspectives

By Vytas Cernius



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When I think about the most revealing way to describe and understand what group behavior is and what a group does or does not do, what it is, and what it wants, I am reminded of a mountain and different ways of exploring and experiencing it. The Mountain, distinctly different from that which is not-mountain, is differently experienced by the traveller who approaches it from the North than it is by the one approaching from the South. From the North it is seen as a slow rising chain of rolling hills, from the South a granite wall. The view from the East is that of an Alpine "Landschaff" from the West a mountain with a cut-off top and a falling-off southern side. None of the views match each other, although the views are of the same mountain. The traveller's view of what is the nature of the mountain is determined by his(1) approach. The one who approaches it on foot, step by step, is caught up in the details: the rocks, the creeks, the grasses, the flowers, the trees, the soil. The one who descends in a helicopter is swept by the total grandeur of the Mountain. In this moment little does he think about the tiny little pieces, grains of sand, rocks, slopes, plants, similar to those found in other mountains -- which make up this mountain. The foot traveller caught up in the little details,

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(1) The common pronoun "he" refers to persons of either sex except when "she" is definitely applicable.

is not aware of the large panoramic views of this mountain. What one sees is determined by the approach, and one chooses the approach depending upon what one wants to see. The increased understanding of a mountain necessitates a multiplicity of views and a recognition of what is present in all mountains and what is distinguishably unique for a particular mountain.

One way of understanding group behavior is to consider the essential nature of the Human Being. The assumption is: group behavior reflects the nature of its members. In this respect the work of Bernard Berrelson and Gary Steiner (2) is revealing. Both men have abstracted 1045 numbered findings from the available scientific studies of human behavior, so far, probably the most thorough effort to assess and to deduct the knowledge which Man (3) has about himself. Admittedly, most of the research studies have been conducted on white North Americans and published in the United States. This raises questions about their generalizability for other cultures and parts of the world. But even accepting these limitations the findings provide us with descriptions of human nature which have been scientifically tested. So far, the scientific method, if applied rigorously, is still the best approach in finding out what really is as opposed to what one wishes it to be.

The Human Being is a creature far removed from its animal origins. (4) He is able to live in a wide range of physical, geographical, social and cultural environments. It is a proof of the Human Being's enormous adjustability to new environments. He is subject to the influence of complex outside and

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(2) Berrelson, B. and Steiner G. Human Behavior: Inventory of Scientific Findings.

(3) This refers to persons of either sex.

(4) The section on the Nature of Man is largely abstracted from Berrelson, B. and Steiner, G. Human Behavior Inventory of Scientific Findings, Ch. 17.

inside forces, and his actions are rarely caused by the force of any single thing. It is determined by a complexity of cultural, economical, political, social, psychological and situational factors. This is reflected in statements such as "... it all depends ..." or ".... some do, and some don't". The human being copes with this complexity by a tremendous need to simplify reality. Complexity tends to result in immobilization. Simplification is essential for action. It leaves energy for work and for play. But at the same time it leads to mistakes in judgement and unrealistic solutions of problems. The human creature views everything that he or she is familiar with as natural, while viewing the unfamiliar as unnatural.

The Human Being makes his own reality. He seeks to change the environment in which he is living to suit his wishes, and to do and learn activities which increase his chances for survival and satisfaction. When he cannot achieve "realistic" satisfaction then he tends to take the other path: to modify what he sees to what he wants to see or hear, or what others want to see or hear. He tends to remember what fits his needs and expectations.

In order to protect himself from whatever is painful or inconsistent with his wishes, he has become an expert in the "defense mechanisms." He misinterprets rather than face up to an opposing set of facts or points of view. He avoids the conflicts of issues and ideals whenever he can by changing the people around him rather than his own mind. When he cannot do this, private fantasies can lighten the load and carry him through. In Man's strain toward consistency (he tries to organize his views in a way that satisfies him and makes sense to him and those around him) it is reality that pays the price. For the Human Being, it is hard to live in a real undiluted world, to see what one really is, to face the conflicts and threats, to bare feelings. An animal will adjust to

the environment on its terms; Man seeks to maneuver his world to suit himself. And when this cannot be done realistically, then the language provides the means to create an imagery setting which suits his wishes. Activities and feelings can be called by other than their real names. Names can be devised to provide the desired outcomes; the outcomes dictated by the needs of control, self-protection, gratification. Words can be used as substitutes or compensations for material goods, or power, or significance. The word can be applied to fit occasions more easily than the occasion modified to fit the word. The management of symbol and language makes life tolerable. It makes it bearable against all the burdens of life: lack of talent, loss of position, compromise of integrity, getting older, being mortal, ingratitude of children, selfishness of parents and spouses, despised love, oppressor's wrongs, and life's peaks and valleys. "In the end as well as in the beginning is the word." (5)

The Human Being not only lives with the reality as he perceives it, but with the reality he makes. He is a social being and for his conception of life and reality he goes to other people. Other people's beliefs and conceptions about life and the world determine his own. From there he finds out and learns what is important and desirable and what is right and what is wrong. His virtue emerges out of his seeking of approval from others and his evil comes from the frustration of not having what he wants. The individual appears to be a social creature, making others and being made by others.

Individuals join groups primarily for two purposes: to make the desired reality by changing or maintaining the surrounding environment; or, if it

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(5) Berrelson and Steiner, p. 665

isn't possible to change the external environment, then to set up the group in such a way that it provides the desired reality within the group boundaries. Group members tend to have similar outlooks upon life and human nature, and their views and needs tend to be compatible. They join the group to bring in harvests, build roads, exploit mineral riches, implement social changes within the community and society. But they also join the group for companionship, for affection, and to combat their feelings of loneliness or insignificance. They create groups which satisfy members' emotional and social needs. This includes creation of defenses and deceptions, simplification of reality, exclusion of unpleasant aspects of reality. All these devices exist to protect the individual from psychological pain.

Individuals in some respects have much in common. However, they also have their differences and have varying conceptions about what is happening or is to happen in a group or organization. After the initial meeting they may end up having differing views of what is to be achieved, what real or imagined reality is to be created and for whose benefit. These conceptions are extensions of self-image and tend to be guarded vigorously. If the group membership benefits decrease or are outweighed by psychological pain, the members' conceptions may be protected by the decision to leave the group and go searching for a more satisfying membership. (6)

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(6) J.R. Gibb views that the formation of trust and confidence in self and the group and the continuous communication regarding individual members' goals and accomodation of these within the group are the key issues in group functioning. For further information see Gibb, J. "Climate for Trust Formation." In T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method, edited by L. Bradford, J. Gibb, and K. Benne. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964, pp. 339-351.

Varying degrees of overt and covert miscommunication and conflict between the outside world and the group or among its members is found in every group. The Jungian conception of differing personality types throws some light on this particular aspect. Jung (7) has postulated that individuals are oriented toward either the external world or the internal universe. These orientations classify the individual as either extroverted or introverted. Furthermore, Jung suggests that the world is perceived through sensing and intuiting in that awareness of a situation comes without evaluation. Sensers use the five senses to experience the world. The intuitives perceive the world through hunches and guesses emerging from their internal world. The evaluation (judging) of the world in terms of what it means, is done through thinking (reason and logic) or through feeling, an emotional, subjective process independent of the external world. And although all of us have all four functions (sensing-intuiting, thinking-feeling) one function exerts greater influence over individual actions than the other three. The individual in his struggles for existence uses his most developed function which becomes the criterion of his habitual reactions. This dominant function is complemented by an auxiliary function or the most developed of the opposite pair. Thus, if an individual's leading function is intuition his auxiliary function will be either feeling or thinking. The leading function enables a person to actively seek out some sets of circumstances while avoiding others, and to experience a particular situation as defined by his own psychological type.

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(7) C.G. Jung, Psychological Types. New York: Harcourt, 1923.

Individuals experience, comprehend, and approach the world depending upon their particular combination of functions. Jung suggested that people who perceive and judge the world using different dominant functions will have difficulty in understanding each other and working together. Individuals who share the world in a similar manner would tend to understand each other and work together easily; individuals perceiving and judging the world through differing functions would tend to conflict with each other. Accordingly, groups composed of the same personality types would experience and judge the world in a similar manner. It would be logical to assume that they would tend to understand each other and work together more easily, although they would tend to have a relatively narrow range of experiences and approaches to problem-solving. (8)

While Jung's thoughts focus on the perceptual and evaluative aspects of individuals' worlds, William C. Schutz (9) explores the emotional dimensions of personality which affect the interpersonal and group behavior. He proposes that human beings have three sets of inherent interpersonal needs: inclusion, control, affection. The three sets of needs are always present but to a varying degree in different individuals and in different phases of group development. The specific expression of the needs is formed by the individual's earliest experiences with the members of his first group, the family.

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(8) Frances E. Hovey and John Scholl have explored this contention. Scholl found that groups consisting of the same Jungian personality types tended to produce written products which were superior to those of heterogeneous groups. However, both researchers' findings generally did not support the above stated assumption. However, due to design limitations no definite conclusion was made. For further information see Hovey, F.E. Group Composition, Group Cohesiveness and Social Process Variables; Scholl, J.N. Task Performance of Small Groups Composed on the Basis of Jung's Psychological Types; both Temple University, Philadelphia. USA, unpublished dissertations.

(9) Schutz, W.C., The Interpersonal Underworld. Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, 1966. Originally published under the title of FIRO: A Three Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.

The first issue in group development is that of members' inclusion or exclusion. The first decision which each individual is to make is that of commitment to become or not to become involved in a given relation or activity with others. At this first phase the individuals spend their energies in exploring whether they belong in this particular group. The need to be included manifests itself as wanting to be attended to, to attract attention and interest, and to be recognized as a distinct person, or having a particular identity. Even negative recognition is partially satisfying, because one is significant enough to receive, at least, some attention. At this beginning stage of group development individuals are interested in finding out what facet of themselves others will be interested in. Silence may indicate that the individual is not sure whether others are interested in him.

Schutz presents three conceptual inclusion categories: the Undersocial, the Social, and the Oversocial. The undersocial tends to be introverted and withdrawn. Consciously, he wants to maintain a distance between himself and others and signals that he does not want to get enmeshed with people and lose his individuality. Unconsciously, he wants others to pay attention to him. His biggest fear is that people will ignore him, have no interest in him. His deepest anxiety emerges out of his self-concept that he is worthless. The oversocial person tends towards social extraversion. He too deep down is afraid that others will ignore him and he too, like the undersocial, thinks of himself as worthless, but he deals with it differently. He seeks to focus attention on himself, make people notice him, be prominent. The more subtle techniques are to acquire power (control) or to be well liked (affection). All this is done with the primary purpose of gaining attention.

The real social persons are unconflicted. Their inclusion relations were successful in childhood and interaction with people presents no problems. This type of person is comfortable with people and comfortable being alone. Depending upon the situation he can be a high or low participator in a group, or he can take a moderate role. He is capable of strong commitments to an involvement with certain groups, and also can withhold commitment, if he feels it is appropriate. All this is done without anxiety. Unconsciously, he feels that he is a worthwhile, significant person.

Control behavior refers to the decision-making process between people, and the areas of power, influence, and authority. The need for control varies along a continuum from the desire for power, authority, and control over others to the need to be controlled, and have responsibilities lifted from one-self. Expressions of independence and rebellion exemplify lack of willingness to be controlled. Compliance, submission and taking orders indicate various degrees of accepting the control of others. There is no ary relation between an individual's behavior towards controlling others and his behavior towards being controlled. Two persons who control others may differ in the degree to which they allow others to control them.

Schutz distinguishes three behavioral types in relating to control. These are: abdicrats, autocrats, and democrats. The abdicrat is a person low on control and tends towards submission, abdication of power and responsibility. He gravitates towards the subordinate positions where he does not have to make decisions. He does not control others even when he should. He fears that he will be given more responsibility than he can handle and thus he never makes a decision if he can refer it to someone else. This kind of person is usually a follower, or at most a loyal lieutenant, but rarely a person who

makes final decisions. Unconsciously, he has the feeling that he is incompetent and incapable of responsible adult behavior and that others know it. He is seeking to avoid situations in which he feels helpless. There is a lurking hostility and lack of trust towards those who might withhold assistance.

The autocrat desires a power hierarchy with himself at the top. His interpersonal behavior is dominating in the extreme. He is the power-seeker, the competer. He is afraid people will not be influenced or controlled by him -- that they will, in fact, dominate him. The autocrat has essentially the same feelings about self as the abdicrat. Basically, the person feels he is not responsible or capable of discharging obligation and that this fact will be found out by others. He attempts to use every opportunity to disprove this feeling to others and himself.

For the individual who in his childhood has successfully resolved his control and power issues with others, the democrat, these areas of interpersonal relating do not present problems. He feels comfortable giving or not giving orders, and taking or not taking orders, as is appropriate to the situation. Unconsciously, he feels that he is a capable, responsible person and, therefore, that he does not need to shrink from responsibilities or try constantly to prove how competent he really is. Unlike the abdicrat and autocrat he is not preoccupied with fears of his own helplessness, stupidity, and incompetence. He feels that other people respect his competence and will be realistic with respect to trusting him with decision-making.

Affection behavior, refers to close personal emotional feelings, (love and hate) between two people. Affection is a dyadic relation, it can occur only between pairs of people at any one time; whereas both inclusion and control relations may occur either in dyads or between one person and a group of persons. In groups, affection behavior is characterized by the desire to spend extra time with the group, and by the pursuit of friendship and differentiation between members. A common method of avoiding a close tie with any one member is to be equally friendly to all members. Thus, "popularity" may not involve affection at all; it may often be inclusion behavior, as contrasted with "going steady" which is usually primarily affection.

Affection is the building of emotional ties. It is usually the last phase to emerge in the development of a relation. It follows inclusion and control. In the inclusion phase, people must encounter each other and decide to continue their relation; control issues require them to work out how they will be related; then, to continue the relation, affection ties must form for a lasting bond.

The person with too little affection, the underpersonal, tends to avoid close, personal ties with others. He maintains his two-person relation on a superficial, distant level and is most comfortable when others do the same with him. Consciously, he wishes to maintain this emotional distance, and express a desire not to get "emotionally involved", while unconsciously he seeks a satisfactory affectional relation. His fear is that no one loves him. In a group situation he is afraid he won't be liked. He has great difficulty genuinely liking people, and distrusts their feelings towards him. The deepest

anxiety rises out of underpersonal self-perception; he is unlovable. He believes that if people got to know him well, they would discover the traits that make him unlovable. The inclusion anxiety energies out of the self-perception of being of no value, worthless; the control anxiety reflects the self-perception of being stupid and irresponsible; the affection anxiety is due to the self-perception of being nasty and unlovable.

The overpersonal type seeks to come extremely close to others. Being liked is extremely important to him as a means of relieving his anxiety about his self-image of being always rejected and unlovable. The direct technique for being liked is an overt attempt to gain approval, be extremely personal, integrating, intimate, confiding. The more subtle technique is to be possessive and punish any attempts by friends to establish other friendships.

For the individual who successfully resolved his affection relations with others in childhood (personal), close emotional relations with other persons present no problems. He is comfortable in personal relations, and he can also relate comfortably in situations requiring emotional distance. And when he finds himself disliked by others this does not mean that he is an unlovable person. Unconsciously, he feels that he is an lovable person who is lovable even to people who know him well. He is capable of giving genuine affection.

The difference between inclusion, control and affection behaviors is that inclusion is concerned primarily with the formation of a relation, whereas control and affection are concerned with relations already formed. Within existent relations, control is the area concerned with who gives orders and makes decisions for whom, whereas affection is concerned with how emotionally close or distant the relation becomes. Inclusion is concerned

with the problem of in or out, control is concerned with top or bottom, and affection with close or far. And although different issues may be predominating for different individuals and different interpersonal behavior may be more apparent at a given time in a group, all three (inclusion, control, affection) are continuously present. However, the degree of dominance is set by the nature of individuals who make up the group.

Groups start with inclusion behavior, which is followed by the emergence of control and finally affection behaviors. Some groups may not move significantly beyond the inclusion or control behavior. However, if the group has moved through all the phases and is to be terminated, then the behaviors progress in reverse direction. The withdrawal from the group begins with the curtailment of affection and then later control and finally inclusion.

According to Schutz, individual members in groups express the inclusion-, control-and affection-behaviors in differing degrees. Important for a group's existence is members' compatibility, the satisfaction of one's own and each others' needs. Compatible members complement each others' needs. The compatibility notion was supported by research. Noncompatible group members dissipate a great deal of energy and time on interpersonal problems, while compatible groups convert the energy into productivity.

Schutz considers groups from the interpersonal needs point of view. Bion (10) considers group emotionality. From his rich clinical experience, he

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(10) Bion, W. Experiences in Groups. New York: Basic Books, 1961.

construed the concept of basic assumption groups. They are the emotional states in which the group members find themselves as they are attempting to accomplish the formal work task. The main emotional assumptions which are reflected in the group behavior are: Dependency relations between the members and the leader, fight-flight or aggression and withdrawal, and pairing or shared interest in which members may be engaged. As the group is seeking to accomplish its work it has to come to terms with its emotionality as expressed through the shifting basic (emotional) assumptions. (11)

Attempts to understand group behavior essentially fall into two trends: The first trend includes those who aspire a unifying view, an all-encompassing brilliant insight. Bion and Freud are probably good examples. They are not unlike those heroes of Tolstoy's War and Peace who, in a sudden flash, became aware of the meaning of life. Secondly, there are those who through methodological, detailed work, adding bits and pieces of information, gain the understanding of what groups are. Bales (12) certainly belongs to the latter group. Through his tediously developed act-by-act scoring system, Interaction Process Analysis, he has accumulated information about group development, role differentiation and individual behavior in group settings.

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(11) Bennis and Shepherd by combining Bionic notions of fight and flight with the typology of its members as dependents, counterdependent and independent have developed a widely used theory. In essence it says that after the initial period of dependency upon authority and structure and a period when the authority and structure are challenged the group ends in the resolution phase. The independents, unconflicted group members, emerge and guide groups' movement. For further information see Warren G. Bennis and Herbert A. Shepherd. A Theory of Group Development, Human Relations, Vol. 9, No. 4,(November, 1956) pp. 415-437.

(12) Bales, R., Interaction Process Analysis. Cambridge: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1950.

His recorded and detailed analysis provide us with quantitive and qualitive differences about the different types of groups and their phases. His recent work explores the fantasy life of groups. In this respect, his interests coincide with those of Philip Slater (13) who in a most imaginative way reflects upon the structural, psychological and religious evolution in groups.

Group psychology has received increasing attention over the last few decades. It has caught the attention of those interested primarily in the output of work and productivity in organizational settings as well as those who would like to use groups as means for personal growth. (14)

A number of theories have emerged, each having its own set of basic assumptions, explaining and exploring differing and overlapping aspects of group functioning. Life and human behavior are richer and more complex and more varied than any conceptual scheme manages to capture. The theory is only a reflection, and an imperfect one at that, of the reality. The theory user has to stretch it to fit life and not attempt to make life fit the theory. It appears that given a choice, different individuals choose differing theories. And the theory satisfies the individual only so long as it makes sense and helps to explain what is happening. There is danger in this, however, when the theory is used as an all-pervading defense against personal anxieties and insecurities and excludes the realities of given situation. It seems that the way towards the most productive functioning in groups (to be able to work and love, to use Freud's statement) is still through the resolution of personal anxieties and internal conflicts rather than through any particular theory.

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(13) Slater, P. Microcosm. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966.

(14) An excellent presentation of these efforts is given in Back, K. Beyond Words. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973.

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Vytautas (Vytas) J. Cernius was born in Lithuania. He spent several of the post-World War II years in refugee camps in Germany and arrived in the United States at the end of the Korean War.

He studied at the Münster University (Physical Sciences), Germany; Boston University (Biology); and University of Chicago (Education, Guidance and Counseling, School Psychology). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1966. He has been interested in and has researched concept formation in children, and has explored, over a twenty year span, acculturation among refugees. More recently, his interests have shifted to change processes in individuals and groups and to the analytical and psychoanalytical (Tavistock Model) approach to the study of groups. He spent Spring of 1973 at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, Switzerland, exploring the psychology of C.G. Jung.

Dr. Cernius has participated in and directed various projects, conferences and workshops on Group Dynamics over the past few years, in the United States, Mexico, and Europe. Presently, he is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychoeducational Processes at Temple University.